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**SCHAKOWSKY HUMAN RIGHTS AMENDMENT STEP CLOSER TO BECOMING LAW
INCLUDED IN EXPORT-IMPORT CONFERENCE
REPORT APPROVED BY HOUSE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The House of Representatives today approved the Export-Import Bank reauthorization Conference Report that includes a human rights amendment championed by U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL). The amendment states ".the sense of the Congress that detailed information on the potential impact on human rights of proposed Export-Import Bank projects should be available to the management of the bank." The Senate is slated to pass this legislation and the President is expected to sign the bill.

"International financing and human rights are not mutually exclusive. Millions of peoples' lives are impacted by decisions made on a daily basis in organizations like the Export-Import Bank of the U.S. That is why this amendment is a small, but important step in our efforts to provide the bank with a fair and true assessment of human rights before a project is approved and to ensure that American taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly," Schakowsky said.

Schakowsky explained, "Additional information on human rights is necessary because current policy provides only one remedy, and that is to completely deny a project on human rights grounds. But those denials are made on the basis of an assessment by the State Department for the entire country in which the project will be located, and not an assessment of the project itself. There should be more tools available to Ex-Im Bank to assess human rights on a project by project basis and to offer a remediation plan when possible."

Schakowsky pointed to Export-Import Bank funded projects that resulted in human rights violations. She said that had information been made available prior to financing, changes could have been made during the project design phase to mitigate those abuses. For example:

- The Dahbol power project is partially owned and operated by Enron. The project received approximately \$290 million in Ex-Im guarantees-despite the World Bank's refusal to fund it and serious human rights problems related to its construction. According to Human Rights Watch, "Enron subsidiaries paid local law enforcement to suppress opposition to its power plant. They broke down the door and window of one of the protestor's bathrooms and dragged her naked into the street, beating her with batons. The protestor was 3 months pregnant at the time."

- In Russia on December 19, 2000, Ex-Im approved a \$91 million project for diamond mine processing equipment and services to Alrosa, the Russian diamond company. Alrosa operates in countries such as Angola where the issue of conflict diamonds is of serious concern. Since inherent risks due to conflict and human rights violations related to diamond mining are serious problems in several parts of the world, a detailed assessment would have been useful to determine whether such risks exist with this project.